THE STRAIGHT GATE TO Heauen.

A Sermon Preached before *the poore diſtreſſed Priſoners in the* Kings Bench common Gaole to their Heauenly comfort.

Luke. 13. 23.

By *William King* Preacher of the word of God, a much afflicted Priſoner there.

The afflictions of this preſent time are not worthy of the glorie that ſhalbe ſhewed vnto vs. Rom 8. 18.

AT LONDON.
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TO THE REVEREND Father in God, *Iohn* by Gods *permiſsion Biſhop of London*: Grace and Peace by Chriſt in this world, and glory with Chriſt in the World to come.

Ight Reuerend, *the care of my dutifulneſſe inforced by the Load-ſtone of your affection, and more then common kindneſſes towards poore Schollers, and eſpecially the miniſters of Gods word; hath imbouldened mee to preſent theſe few lines, the labours and fruites of*

my endeauours since the time of my imprisonment (for suertieship and debt) to the eyes of your discretion, hoping you will vouchsafe to Patronize the same, and suffer them to shelter vnder the defensiue shadowes of your safe protection. Many I confesse haue trauailed in the same kinde before mee both largely and learnedly (farre beyond the reach of my skill) Many wise and cunning Bezaleels *fraught with all spirituall knowledge for furthering of spirituall workemanship, hath God in our time raised (and still may raise I wish) for the building of the temple of his sonne in the hearts of his children: a Temple more glorious then that was of* Salomons *though*

King. 6.

it

it were ouerlaid within and without with the pureſt gold: my ſelfe alſo hath aduentured to come after them with my free will offering, howſoeuer worſt able of a thouſand to furniſh the building of the Sanctuary, which though it may not preſume to preaſe among the chiefeſt, yet may it looke for acceptance at leaſt in his due place, like the Goates hayre among the fine purple and ſcarlet. Exod. 35. 23

The true knowledge of the Meſſias the Lord, and Soueraigne Conqueror of Sathan, and diſſoluer of Sathans workes by death, ſo proclained in Paradiſe, and by an Angell at his birth, as it is the Summe of the Goſpells Doctrine, ſo ought it to bee holden of all that loue their

soules eternall safety, the wisedome which attained in possession, makes the attainers shine at length as the brightnes of the Firmament: yea euerlastingly so shine in Gods glorious Kingdome: without this, all worldly wit and wisedome of man though much admired desired, honored, is meere folly and worse then so, enmity against God. So conceiued the Doctor of the Gentiles of the one and the other: which conceipt as it drew from him that, Væ mihi si non Euangelizauero: so hath it beene to me euer since a Preacher (though of all other most vnworthy that chiefe and waighty function) motiue preuayling for my chiefe endeauour to know and make

1 Cor. 9. 16.

knowne

knowne redemption by Christ, how God in Christ reconciled the world to himselfe, the world otherwise in high displeasure with the King of Heauen.

This Sermon subsequent, a Sermon preached by me in the common Gaole of the Kings Bench, haue I presumed to dedicate vnto you: to whom I rest assured the wisedome of Christ crucified is and euer shall be holden in precious regard. This haue I done, Right Reuerend, to testifie my loue, and for the due acknowledgement of my duty I owe vnto your Lordship, (the Mæcenas of Learning, the louer of Vertue and hater of Vice) hauing no other externall meanes of demonstrating

my

my inward affection: Publiſh your favours toward Schollers in part I may, to the full I cannot, much leſſe make requitall. This onely I ſay, and ſay it in Samuels *wordes:*

1 Sam 12. 23. God forbid that I ſhould ſinne againſt the Lord and ceaſe to pray for you and Yours.

(.)

Your Lordſhips in all Chriſtian duty to command in the Lord IEHOVAH, the ſinfull

William King.

The Straight Gate to Heauen.

Striue to enter in at the ſtraight gate: for many (I ſay vnto you) will ſeeke to enter in and ſhall not be able. Luke 13. 24.

OVr Lord Ieſus Chriſt ſaith in the 20. of Math. Many are called, but few are choſen. In the 7. of Math. ver. 13. he bids vs Enter in at the ſtrait gate: for it is the wide gate and broad way that leadeth to deſtruction: many there bee that goe in thereat: becauſe the gate is ſtraight, and the way narrow, that leadeth vnto life, and few their be that find it. *Via lata et ſpacioſa.*

In this place of Saint Luke we read of a certaine man which came to our Sauiour Chriſt and aſked him of purpoſe, whether few ſhould be ſaued. To whom our Lord Ieſus anſwered thus. Striue to enter in at the ſtraight Gate: for many (I ſay vnto you) will ſeeke to enter in and ſhall not be able. In which Anſwer albeit our Sauiour doth not an- Lu. 13. 23 *Via arcta quæ ducit ad vitam.*

swer directly to his question, either negatiuely, or affirmatiuely: yet doth hee plainely insinuate by his speeches, that few shall be saued.

Reuerend regarded in Christ Iesus. This is a sufficient motiue whereby our Sauiour Christ forewarneth vs, that if we doe not in time repent, forsake our sinnes and seeke after God: both the ancient Christian Fathers, (whose eyes saw not that we see, nor their eares heard not that we heare) yea the very Heathen also shall rise vp in iudgement against vs. For it is good counsell which Saint Augustine giueth. Quid prodest si omnia habes, eam tamen qui omnia dedit, non habere? what is a man the better though hee haue all things, and bee without him which is the Author of all things.

Let none therefore stumble at it: but if any do, let them remember the charge that we haue also from God. Oh (saith one) consideret periculum meum. Hee that is displeased with me, let him consider my danger. For saith not God to Ier. 1. 17. Ieremy, that hee would destroy him before his face if he held his peace? Saint

Augustine

Auguſtine ſaith very well, Quid tu ſuccenſes mortalis, ſub iuſſione Chriſti mare audit, et tu ſurdens es? O worme of the earth, why doſt thou ſtorme? the ſea heard and obeyed the voyce of Chriſt: and doſt thou ſtop thy eares? Mare audit, ventus ceſſat, et tu ſuſſlas? The ſea waxed calme, the winde was ſtill, and doſt thou begin to bluſter and ſwel? Do not we ſpeake from the mouth of God? Doth not the holy Ghoſt gaine vs lofty and glorious titles? as the Stewards of Gods owne houſe, Diſpoſers of his ſecrets, Diſburſers of his treaſures, Keepers of the broad ſeale, Keepers of the keyes of heauen, Gods Secretaries, Gods Ambaſſadors, Angells, yea the very glory of Chriſt: and all this to expreſſe the excellency of our calling: yet the vilde varlets and venomous vermine of the Earth dare call vs proud Prelates, pild Parſons, and pelting Prieſts. O monſtrous and intollerable impiety: I ſpeake to all ſorts, I ſpeake not to ſome few of one ſort: But that which herein I ſpeake is not much more then that of the Apoſtle Paul (as ſome of your owne Poets

Tit. 1. 7.
1 Cor. 4. 1
Ma 16. 19
2 Cor. 5. 20.
Apo. 3. 7. 24.
2 Cor. 8. 23.
Act. 17.

haue ſaid) which is warrantable.

One thing therfore deare Chriſtians let me beg of you: to wit, that you would heare diligently, receiue zealouſly, and iudge ſoberly & diſcreetly. Non mea verba ſunt, ſed verba vitæ eternæ, They are not my words but the words of eternall life. For the word of God hath ſundry hearers: ſome receiue it, ſome receiue it not. Note the Parable of the ſeed: the ſeed of the word of God when it was ſowed: fell ſome by the hie way ſide, ſome vppon ſtony ground, ſome vpon thornes, and ſome in good grownd, &c. But more briefly & ſtrictly the word of God hath two ſorts of hearers: Elect and Reprobate. The Elect ſay with Peter. Domine ad quem ibimus? verba vitæ æternæ habes: Maiſter to whom ſhall wee goe? thou haſt the words of eternall life. The Reprobate ſay, Durus eſt hic ſermo: this is a hard ſaying, who can heare it? can mortallity put on immortallity? can this corruption put on incorruption? can Chriſt bee God and man? can God beget a ſonne? as of late the Diuell of Norwich diuelliſhly ſaid: yea worſe then

Mat. 10.
Mat. 13.
Mat. 4.
Luk. 8.
Iohn. 6.
Fox in the Booke of Mart.

a Diuell was hee: For the Deuills in the 4. of Luke acknowledged Christ, crying and saying: thou art Christ the sonne of God, but this Diuell denyed Christ. Luk. 4.

The word of God is preached in in vaine to many: the hony is lost that is put into vessells of gall: the fish is cast away that is put into dry pooles: and the sæde perisheth that is sowed vpon the sande. Saint Cyprian saith. Certe labor irritus est, et nullus effectus offerre, lumen cæco, sermonem surdo, sapientiam bruto: cum nec sentire brutus possit, nec cæcus lumen admittere, nec surdus audire. Truely it is lost labour and to no purpose, to offer light to a blind man, spæch to a deafe man, wisedome to a grosse head: seeing that a grosse head cannot perceiue, a blind man cannot see, & a deafe man cannot heare. The ancient Father Origen saith: Quanto melius esset nonnullis omnino non audire verbum Dei, quam audire cum malitia, vel audire cum hipocrisi: melius autem dicimus ad comparationem malorum: How much better were it for some not to heare the word of God Cyprian cont. Dem. Tract. 1. pag.

at all, then to heare with mallice, or to heare it with hippocrisie, we say better in respect of evills.

Therefore my deare brethren and fellow Prisoners, your friendly censure I humbly desire, to gaither with your diligent attention, a due regard of the matter ensuing: In the opening and explication of these words of our Saviour Christ: wherein, I doe assure you, I meddle not at all with any controversies in the Church, or any thing in the state Ecclesiasticall, but onely enter into a controversie with Sathan and sinne. It is contriued into three principall heades; wherein our Saviour Christ declareth how hard a thing it is to enter into life, and how few shall enter. In the first, our Lord Jesus bids vs striue earnestly. In the second, hee affirmeth that the gate is very straight. In the third, he saith, That many which seeke to enter in, shall not be able.

Luk. 13, 23,

The particulers that occurre (as many there are) they shall be touched, rather then handled in their place.

1 Cap.

As touching the first head, where hee bids vs striue earnestly, noting thereby

by that it is a matter of great ſtrife a-gainſt the world, the fleſh, and the Di-uell: And therfore we may rather won-der that any ſhall be ſaued, then ſo few ſhall be ſaued. For wee haue all the lets and hinderances that may be, both within vs and without vs; wee haue (as they ſay) the Sunne, Moone, and ſeauen ſtarres againſt vs: wee haue all the Diuells in hell againſt vs, with all their hornes, heads, maruelous ſtrēgth, infinite wiles, cunning deuiſes, deepe ſlightes, and mothodicall temptations. Here raues a ſore ſtreame againſt vs. Then haue we this preſent euill world againſt vs with his innumerable baites, ſnares, nettes, ginnes, grins &c. to catch vs, fetter vs, and intangle vs. Here haue we both profits and plea-ſures, riches and honour, wealth and preferment, ambition and couetouſnes. Here comes a campe royall of ſpirituall and inuiſible enemies. Laſtly, we haue our fleſh, that is our corrupted nature againſt vs: we haue our ſelues againſt our ſelues: For we our ſelues are as great enemies to our ſaluation, as ei-the world or the Diuell: For our vnder-

ſtanding, reaſon, will, and affections are altogether againſt vs. Our natural wiſdome is an enemy vnto vs: Our concupiſcences & luſts do miniſter ſtrength to Sathans temptations, they are all in league with Satan againſt vs, They take part with him in euery thinge againſt vs and our ſaluation, they fight all vnder his ſtandard and receiue their pay of him: This then goeth hard on our ſide, that the Diuel hath an inward partie againſt vs, and wee carrie alwaies within vs our greateſt enemy, which is euer ready night and day to betray vs into the hands of Sathan: yea, to vnbouilt the dooze to let him in to cut our throats. Here then wee ſee an hugh army of dreadfull enemies, and a very legion of Diuells lying in ambuſh againſt our ſoules: Are not wee therefore, pooze wretches, in a moſt pittiful caſe, which are thus beſiedged and betrayed on euery ſide? All thinges then duely conſidered, may not wee iuſtly maruaile that any ſhall be ſaued? For who ſeeth not, who knoweth not that thouſand thouſãds are caried headlong to diſtruction (without the great mercy

of

of God:) either with the temptations of the world, the flesh, or the Diuell. But yet further I will shew you, by other apparant and euident reasons, that the number of Gods elect vpon the face of the earth are very few in comparison, which may thus be considered. First let there be taken away from amongst vs the Papists, Atheists, and Heritiques. Secondly, let there be shoueled out all vitious and notorious euil liuers: as swearers, drunkards, whoremongers, carnall worldlings, deceauers, coseners, proud men, riotors, gamsters, and the prophane multitude. Thirdly, let there be refused and sorted out all Hipocrites, carnal Protestants, daine professers, backe-sliders, declyners and cold Christians. Let all these (I say) be separated, and then tell me how many sound, sincere, faithfull and zealous worshippers of God wil be found amongst vs: I suppose we should not need the art of Arithmatick to number them, for I thinke there would bee very fewe in euery Village, Towne, and Cittie, I doubt they would walke very thinly in the streete, so as a man

might

Luk, 18, 8 might eafily tell them as they goe. Our Lord Jeſus aſketh a queſtion in ẏ Goſpell of S. Luke, ſaying, Do you thinke when the ſonne of man commeth, that he ſhall finde faith on the earth? to the which wee may anſwer, ſurely very litttle.

Geneſis. To make it more clearely manifeſt that few ſhall be ſaued: in the firſt age of the world, all fleſh had ſo corrupted their wayes that God could no longer beare thẽ, but euen vowed their diſtruction by ouerflowing of waters: when the flud came, how few were foũd faithful: eight perſõs were only ſaued by ẏ Arke. How few righteous were found in Sodome, & the Citties adioyning: but one poore Lot and his familie. How few beleeuers were found in Iericho: but one Rahab. How few of the old Iſraelites entred into the Land of promiſe: but two, Caleb and Ioſuah: the reſt could not enter in becauſe of vnbeliefe. The true and inuiſible Church was ſmale, during the gouernment of the Iudges, as appeareth plentifully in that booke. In Elias time the Church was ſo ſmall

1 Kin, 17 that it did appeare weake. In the raign of

of the Kinges of Israell and Iudah, the sincere worshippers were very few, as appeareth by the complaint of all the Prophets. During the captiuity, the Church was as the mone vnder a cloud: she was driuen into a wildernes, where she did hide herselfe. During the persecution of the Greeke Empyre by Gog and Magog, and Egypt, they were fewest of all. In Christs time, with what silly company did he begin withal? How were al things corrupted by the Priests, Scribes, and Pharises? In the beginning of the Apostles preaching there were few beleeuers. After the first six hundreth yeares, what an eclipse was in the Church, during the height of Antichrists raigne? How few true worshippers of God were in the world for y space of almost nine hundreth yeares? Since the Gospell was preached and spred abroad how few doe beleeue? And as the Prophet Esay saith, Domine quis credidit auditui nostro? Lord who hath beleeued our report? Thus then you see, it doth appeare (both by Scripture, reason, and examples of all ages) that the number of the elect is very smale, and Esa, 53, 1

when

when all comes to all few shal be saued. Therefore let vs striue earnestly to goe in at the straight gate, for the small number of those that shal be saued ought to thrust vs forward to enter in thereat. Christ saith Contendite intrare per angustam portam, quia multi (dico vobis) studebunt intrare, et non poterunt. Striue to enter in at the narrow gate, for many (I say vnto you) will seeke to enter in and shall not be able. And in an other place, he saith, The gate is straight and the way narrow that leadeth vnto life, and fewe there be that finde it. If men would consider of this, and try with themselues whether they bee of that smal number or no; it would make them looke better about them &c. Death threatneth vs, who is very terrible to the flesh, and the remembrance of it very bitter to a man that is solaced, soaked and setled in the pleasures of this world. It flattereth no man, it regardeth not persons, it waigheth not friendship, it careth not for rewards, it is very grim, vgly, and cruell, and killeth downeright where it hitteth. Therfore Christ bids vs striue earnestly. To knit vp

Luk, 13 24,

Mat, 14,

vp this point, S. Bernard saith, there is none of vs all which standeth not in néed of councell, prayers, and helpe. The generall misery of mankind is triple &c. For both we are easie to be seduced, and vnable to doe well, and very weake to resist. If we would discerne betweene good and euill, we are deceiued: if wee goe about to doe good, we quickly faint: if we endeauour to resist euill, wee cannot endure, but are easily ouercome. The tirannie and rage of Sathan is vnspeakeable, and his power mighty: the baytes of the world be innumerable, and our flesh fraile and weake: They are three deadly enemies to our saluation, against whom wee must all ioyntly fight. Bernard sermone 7 de aduent domini.

Our aduersary the Diuell is a roaring Lyon, rangeth about, seeking whom hee may deuoure, and inuenteth a thousand wayes to entrap vs, & bring vs to euerlasting shame and destruction. 1 Pet, 5, 8 6 12

For S. Paul saith, wee wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against rule, against powers, against worldly gouernours of the darkenes of this world, against spirituall wickednes in all spi- 1 Ioh, 5 16 1 Ioh, 2 16

rituall

rituall places. Our second enemy is the world, the whole world is altogi-
Gal. 5. 1 pet. 2. 11 ther set on wickednes, there is nothing
Gal. 5. in the world but the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.
1 pet. 2. 11 The third, our flesh, our flesh which rebelleth, and lusteth contrary to the spirit, fleshlie lusts fight against the soule: Here you see what enemies they be to our salvation.

The waies and means of striving How then shall we strive to enter in at the strait gate and narrow way leading to everlasting life? First resist the Divell and he will flye from you. Resist him in faith, in Prayer and in the word. Secondly, bee crucified to the
Luke 4. 2 Tim 4. world even as strangers, which are not of the World. For we have no abiding
Gal 6, 14 He. 13. 14 City heere: but we seeke one to come, saith the Apostle. Lastly chastice thy body with watchings with labour, with fastings: it is a great victory to over come the divell, a greater to overcome the world: and the greatest of all to overcome thy flesh and fleshly unruly affections. To him that overcommeth shall be given a crowne: But hee that is overcome shal be the continuall bond-

bondman of Sathan our vile and cruell enemy. Let vs striue that we may ouercome: he onely that striueth lawfully shall be crowned. Let euery man therefore keepe his stand or station in all obedience and readines. Stoutly must we fight vnder Christs victorious Banner. They are not trifles for which we striue: therefore let vs not shrinke nor cowardly runne away: but with an inuincible courage in an assured hope of victory, aboue all warlike miseries sustayned with the consort of ỳ reward: which no man shall receiue except he striue lawfully. No man that putteth his hand to the plow and looketh backwards is worthy of the kingdome of heauen: but hee that endureth to the end shall be saued. 1 Tim. 4. 2 Tim. 2. Mat. 10.

Now wee striue for Christ and not for Antichrist; for the truth, and not against it. I can doe nothing against the truth but for the truth saith Saint Paul: for the Ghospell, and not for the doctrine of men: for true religion, not for superstition must we striue. But our striuing for the most part is all awry and wicked: we striue who may be the proudest, 1 Cor. 13

pre-

pretending equality: wee ſtriue indeed for ſuperiority, neither equall nor ſuperior can we abide: we ſtriue how to ſupplant and ouerthrow one another: enuy hath made men impudent, ſtriuing to vndermine and caſt downe the walles of innocency: ſtriuing how to place and diſplace; how to diſgrace, and how to bring into fauour; how to ſet vp and how to throw downe. And in ſo doing wee ſtriue againſt our ſelues, and for the aduantage of our deadly foes. This warre is not Chriſtian, this is not to ſtriue lawfully: this is not to fight a good fight: this Victory ſhall not bee crowned.

Behold in a word, I ſpeake vnto you all: how many are there amongſt you (a ſhame to ſpeake it) that ſeeke to ſtriue lawfully: but rather ſtriue againſt your ſelues, and follow the example of the multitude: namely in ſwearing, blaſphemy, curſed ſpeaking, rayling, backbiting, ſlandering, chiding, quarrelling, contention, ieſting, mocking, flattering, lying, diſſembling, &c. Theſe thinges doe ouerflow in all places, ſo as men which feare God, had better bee

any where then in company with such men.

Lactantius Firmianus speaking of the end of the world, saith: Si erunt boni, prædæ ac ludibrio habebuntur. If there remaine any good men at that time, they shall be counted a prey, a booty, a mocking stocke. Canst thou not flatter? Canst thou not lye? Canst thou not play the Hyppocrite? Canst thou not follow the fashion, and serue the stage? No, then thou art no meete man to liue in this world: choose a few companions. But I say vnto you as Nestor did vnto his children; pray, for vnlesse God helpe vs, wee all perish. *Lactant. Acephali. cap. 11.*

Now I beseech you brethren and fellow Prisoners, euen for Iesus Christs sake doe not as the multitude doth, which wee see dayly before our eyes to wallow in wickednes: but keepe your selues from the broad way and widegate leading vnto euerlasting damnation.

Striue earnestly. The Almighty God of his ineffable goodnes, when he saw the weaknes of our flesh by nature prone to euill, and therefore vnable to withstand the Diuell, who is called a Dragon with seauen heads for his subtilty, & ten horns,

for his cruelty) euen then most louingly shewed vs an excellent remedy, whereby we might preserue our selues from iniury, and that is Prayer. It behoouethvs to take it for our weapon, that we may keepe our selues from the inuasion of Sathan. For as the Lyon (at the sight of a Cocke) is discomforted, and at his crowing betaketh himselfe to his heels: So doth Satan both stand in feare of a godly man, and fly at his prayer. And Lactantius noteth, Diuels do hurt but the faint hearted: such as the great and mighty hand of God doth not protect, which are prophane from the sacrament of truth: but the iust, that is the true worshippers of God, doe the Diuels feare.

Gaudētius Merula de memorabilibus l. 2 c. 9 Lactant de error. ca. 16.

Let vs valiantly take this weapon in hand and manfully fight with Sathan e fin: let vs try our combate in the field of the holy Scriptures; let vs begin to traverse the way of Gods commandements, and breake into these wordes. The afflictions of this present time are not worthy of the glory that shall bee shewed vnto vs. Let vs striue to enter in at the straight gate and narrow way leading vnto eternall saluation: to wit charity, which is the root and mother of all good workes: ioy

Ro. 8. 18.

Gal. 5. 22

in seruing of God, peace or tranquillity of minde in the stormes of this world: patience in aduersity: longanimity in expecting our reward: bonity in hurting no man: benignity in sweet behauiour: gentlenes in occasion giuen of anger: faithfulnes in performance of our promises: modesty with out arrogancie: continence from all kinde of wickednes: chastity in conseruing a pure mind in a cleane and vnspotted body. Against these, saith Saint Paul, there is no law: contrarily, let vs shun and auoyd the broad way, and wide gate leading vnto euerlasting destruction: namely fornication, vncleanes, wantonnes, letthery, idolatry, poysonings, enmities, contentions, emulations, wrath, strife, dissention, sects, enuy, murther, drunkennes, gluttony, and such like, of which I foretell you as I haue told you before, that those men which doe such things, shall neuer obtaine the kingdome of Heauen. Gal. 5. 20 21.

Heere then you see how hard a thing it is to striue to enter into the kingdome of Heauen, and how few shal enter: therfore some because it is difficult to striue, striue not at all. But Christ bids vs striue earnestly, & warneth euerlasting

peace and comfort vnto him. Contendenti et vincenti, that striueth and ouercommeth, saying, though in the world ye haue no peace, but tribulations and afflic-
Iohn 16. 33. tions, yet bee of good cheere. Ego vici mundum et omnia in hoc mundo. I haue ouer come the world, and all thinges in this world, and therefore in me you shall haue peace eternally.

2 Cap. In the second head our Lord Iesus Christ affirmeth that the gate is very straight, noting that none can enter in without vehement crouding, and almost breaking their shoulder bones: that is, none can enter into eternall life, without vehement suit, earnest prayer & supplication vnto God for the forgiuenes of their sinnes, wrought by the spirit of grace in the hearts of all Christians with an inward and true repentance: and God shall direct all thy wayes, and appoint thee how to goe either hither or thither as the
Esaias 30, 20, 21. *panis arctus et aqua breuis.* prophet Esaias saith. Though the Lord giue thee bread of trouble, and the water of affliction and aduersity, thy raine shall be no more so scant: but thine eyes shall see the raine: yea and thine eare shall heare the talking of him that speaks behind thee. This is the way, walke there-

in, turne not aside neither to the right hand nor to the left. Wherfore: hoc opus, hic labor: endeauour we, and let our chiefest care, yea our greatest endeauour be: for the vertue of his grace the antecedent to glory: both which are his free gift. The Lord will giue grace and glory, and no good thing wil he withhold from them that walke vprightly. psal 84.11

As I haue shewed you of sundry lets both within vs and without vs which do keepe vs back from God and hold vs fast in our sinnes: so now vnto all that hath beene said before, I will lay forth vnto your view seauen especiall lets and hinderances vnto eternall life: which may not vnfitly be termed seauen barres out of heauen, and seauen gates into hell: and thereby you shall perceiue that the gate is very straight that leadeth vnto life, and few there be that find it.

The first which is infidelity is proued out of the fourth Chapter to the Hebrews where it is thus written: Vnto vs was the Gospell preached as vnto them: but the word which they heard profited them not, because it was not mixed with faith in those that heard it. And againe they could not enter in because of vnbeleefe. Heb. 4.

Heere we se that vnbeliefe did barre out the old people from entring into the land of promise: which was a figure of Gods eternall kingdome. And sure it is that the same vnbeliefe doth barre out thousands of vs. For many will beleeue nothing but their owne fantasies: they will not beleeue the word of God; especially when it is contrary to their lust and likings, profits and pleasures. Though things be manifestly proued to their faces, and the Chapter and verse shewed them: yet will they not beleeue: or though they say they will beleeue: yet will they neuer goe about the practise of any thing but reply against God in all their actions. And for the most part when God saith one thing, they will either say or do an other: when God saith yea, they will say no, and so giue God the lye. Some againe will say, if all bee true that the preachers say, then God helpe vs. Thus you see how infidelity doth barre men out of Heauen, and cast them into Hell.

The second gate, which is the presumption of Gods mercie: for if men be sharplie reproued for their sinnes, and exhorted vnto repentance, by and by they take co-

uert

nert, saying, God is merciful, as though God were made all of mercy, and that there were no Justice in him at all: and thus the wicked make Gods mercy an occasion, which though the Prophet Nahum in the first Chapter of his prophecie doth sharplye reproue, The Lord (saith he) is slow to anger, but he is great in power, and wil not surely cleare the wicked. Here we see that God will not surely spare such as goe on in their sinnes, presuming of his mercie, and saying in their hearts, If I may but haue a Lord of mercy vpon mee three howers before my death, I care not. But it is iust with God when those three howers come, to shut them vppe in blindnes, and hardnes of heart, as a iust plague for their presumption. Therefore the Prophet Dauid, seeing the grieuousnes of this time, prayeth to be deliuered from it. Keepe me O Lord from presumptuous sinnes, let them not raigne ouer mee. Let all men therefore take heed of presumptuous sinnes, which is the onely cauls that sinne doth so mightelie abound in our age: and let vs not continue in sin presuming of Gods mercy, but let vs come vnto God for mercy whiles ỹ gates of mercy are opened vnto vs. For though Psal. 19

God be full of mercy yet will he shew no mercie to them that presume of his mercy, but they shall once knowe to their cost, that Justice goeth from him, as well as mercie. And therefore it may well be called the straight gate to heauen, and the wide gate to hell.

Let vs come to the third gate, which is the example of the multitude, for that doth harden & imbolden men vnto sinne: As when many birds doe flicker and flock togither, they fall vpon the net without any feare, but one or two alone will be afraid. Euen so the example of many sinfull companions doe imbolden men to runne through the snares of Sathan without any mistrust. This is proued in the 23. of Ex. where the Lord saith flatlie, Thou shalt not follow a multitude to doe euill. This is the thing that hindereth a great number from God, for they neuer looke vp vnto God, or to his word, but stare vpon the common multitude, and doings of most men, and examples of the world, thinking that if they doe as the most men doe, as their forefathers haue done before them, they are sure and of an euen ground. And hereupon riseth their diuelish prouerbe, Doe as the most men

doe, and the fewest will speake of you, which is a very wicked speech. But they haue forgotten S. Paules rule. Ne configuremini seculo isto &c. Fashion not your selues like vnto this world. These fellowes that stand vpon the multitude, will reason thus, wee see none of these great ones of the world, none of the noble, none of the rich, none of the wise and prudent receiue this doctrine, but onely a few shackragges and beggerly rascalls, and therefore it is a token that it is nothing worth, and that it is doubtfull, and not for vs to meddle withall. Loe what thoughts may creepe in to our hearts, and how slily Satan may trumpe in our way and blindfould vs, and lead vs away in the darke by doting and dozing vs with the example of the multitude. Let vs therfore take heed of these pitfals which Satan layeth in the way, and not be caried away with these thoughts and reasons. The wicked beare themselues in hand that they shall win the game, & that the goale goeth on their side, and there is nothing but crowing long before it be day, and great triumphing amongst them before any stroake be stricken: and that because we be but a handfull of people, and they

a great multitude: and that in a manner the whole world agreeth with them to practise our death. Thus the diuell doth cast a mist before their eyes, and leades them away from the straight gate to heauen, and bringes them into the broad way, which leadeth them to the bottomlesse pit of hell. Therefore my deare brethren, let vs stand fast in the word of the Lord, and take heed of bending with the way, that wee be not carried away, or bowed quite downe with the raging streame of the multitude, for the sway of the world doth way down all thinges that can be spoken out of the word of God, and openeth a very wide passage into hell.

Now let vs proceede to the fourth gate into hell, which is the long custome of sinne, for that taketh away all sence and feeling of sinne, and making it as it were an other nature vnto vs, so that we may as well alter nature as shake it off, when it is thus soldered vnto vs through long custome, this is noted by the Prophet Ieremy to be a very dangerous thing. For he saith, Can the blacke Moore change his skin, or the Leopard his spots? then may ye also doe good, which are accustomed to doe euill. Here the Prophet affir-

Ier. 13. 23

meth

meth that it is as hard to cure an old dis-
ease that is bred in the bone, or to reme-
die a sin that hath bene hatched & brought
up with vs, as to wash a blacke Moore
white, or to change the spots of a Leo-
pard, which cannot be without the de-
stroying of nature. And surely, trye it
who will, he shall find it as hard a mat-
ter to leaue an old custome, whether it be
of swearing, gaming, lying, whoring,
euill company, or any other sinne, as to
wash an Aethiopian. Therefore it is writ-
ten Pro. 27. Though thou shouldest bray
a foole in a morter among wheate brayed
with a pestle, yet will not his foolishnes
depart from him: So that as long as wee
are in custome with sinne, the doore of hea-
uen is barred vp against vs. pro, 27

Now let vs heare of the fift gate, which
is the long escaping of punishment: this
is touched by ỳ wise man in these words Eccl, 8, 11
Because sentence against an euill worke is
not executed speedily, therfore the hearts
of the children of men haue set them to
doe euill. Where hee sheweth, that one
cause why men are so hardned in their
sinnes is, because God winketh at them
and letteth them alone, not punishing
them imediately after they haue sinned:

For

For if God should forthwith strike dow
one, and rayne downe fire and brimst
vpon an other, & cause the earth to swa
low vp the third, then men would fea
indeed. But God taketh not that course
for though he meeteth with some in th
life, yet he lets thousands escape, and th
makes them more bould, thinking th
shall neuer come to their answer. Eue
as an old Theefe, which hath a long tim
escaped both prison and gallowes, thinke
he shall alwayes escape, and therefore go
eth bouldly on in his thefts. But let me
take heede, for as the prouerb saith, thoug
the Pitcher goeth long to the well, yet a
last it commeth broken home: so thoug
men escape long vnpunished for sinne, ye
shall they not alwaies be freed: for ther
will come a day of reuenge, a day that wi
pay them home for all. Thus you se
that impunity leadeth numbers to de
struction: that is, when men are let alone
and neither smitten by the hand of God
nor punished by the law of the Magi
strate.

The first gate is the beholding of o
ther mens deedes: for when some men
that haue liued a wicked and vngratious
life, and haue bene notorious sinners e
men

uen to the world ward, so that euery man could poynt at them, if vpon their death bed, they say a few good words, and cry God mercie and say their prayers, and forgiue all the world, and so dye quietly, it is maruelous to heare how the foolish people of the world will extault them, and iustifie them saying, He made a very good end as any man could make, and dyed as quietly as a Lambe, and set all thinges in good order before he dyed. Herevpon an other wicked and monstrous varlet is encouraged to sinne: for thinketh he, such a man liued as wickedly and loosely as I, or any man else, and yet he made a very good end, and why may not I doe so too? But alasse, these mens eyes are bleared: for to dye quietly, is not to dye godly, to cry God mercy for fashion sake, is not to haue God mercifull, to say a few prayers with teeth outward, is not to dye in the faith of Christ, for many doe this and yet dye miserably.

The last gate is hope of long life. This is affirmed by our Lord Iesus concerning the rich worldling, who when he felt the world come in vppon him, with full streame; said hee would pull downe his Barnes and build greater, and say to his Luk. 12. 19

soule: Soule habes multa bona reposita in annos multos; requiesce, comede, bibe, oblectare. Thou hast much goods laid vp for many yeares, liue at ease, eat, drink and take thy pastime. But our Sauiour calleth him foole for flattering himselfe in security, and promising vnto himselfe long life: moreouer he plainely telleth him that the same night he should make a hellish and miserable end. Note I pray you how Iesus Christ the fountaine of all wisedome, calleth this man a foole, and yeeldeth a reason thereof, to wit, because hee gathered ritches to himselfe, and was not rich in God: he had great care of this life and none at all for that which is to come. So then it followeth that all such are meere fooles indeede, and may bee Chronicled for fooles (howsoeuer they be taken and reputed in the world) which haue much care for their bodies and none for their soules: great care for this life: and none at all for that which is to come. Well let all such prophane worldlings, as dreame and dote of long life, (& therefore defer the day of their repentance vnto God) take heed by this mans example, that they reckon not without their host, and be suddainely snatcht away in

the midst of all their pleasures, and iollities, as Iob saith, Some dye in their full strength being in all ease and prosperity: their brests are full of milke, and bones run full of marrow. We see therefore how dangerous a thing it is for men to flatter and sooth vp themselues with hope of a long life. Iob. 21. 24.

Via arctissima the way is very straight, my little flock speak thus one to another: Come and let vs goe vp to the mountaine of the Lord, to the house of the God of Iacob. Et docebit nos vias suas: and he will teach vs his wayes, and wee will walke in his pathes: for we wil no longer follow the multitude, nor walke in the wayes of the wicked: but wee will visit the true Church whereas the people are taught by Gods pure word. The Prophet Hosea saith, the waies of the Lord are strait, and the iust shall walke in them: but the wicked shall fall therein. So saith the Prophet Dauid. The Scriptures are a guid to our feet. So saith the old father Origen. Clausum est negligentibus, inuenitur quærentibus. It is shut from the negligent: but it is open to them that seeke and knocke for it. Saint Clemens Alexandrinus saith also. Audite qui estis Esa. 2, 3. Mich. 4, 2 Alluding to mount Sion wher the visible Church then was. Osea 14. Cap. vlt, ver. psal. 118. Orig. Ex. Hom. 9.

longe, audite qui prope: nullis celatum est Verbum, lux est communis omnibus: illuceſcit hominibus: nullus eſt in verbo cimmerius, feſtinemus ad ſalutem, ad regenerationem. Hearken ye that be farre off, hearken ye that be neere, the word of God is hid from no man; it is a light common to all men, there is no darknes in Gods word: let vs make haſt to ſaluation, to regeneration. Fulgentius writeth, in Scripturis diuinis abundat, et quod robuſtus comedat, et quod paruulus ſugat. In the Scriptures of God there is plenty ſufficient, both for the ſtrong to eate and the little one to ſucke. So ſaith Irenæus, Scripturæ in aperto ſunt et ſine ambiguitate: et ſimiliter ab omnibus audiri poſſunt. The Scriptures are plaine, without doubtfulnes, and may be heard indifferently of all men. So ſaith Chryſ. Omnia clara et plana ſunt in Scripturis diuinis, quæcunque neceſſaria ſunt, manifeſta ſunt. Whatſoeuer thing is neceſſary for vs is alwayes manifeſt. So ſaith Epiphanius Lib. 2. So ſaith Saint Ierome in Pſal. 86. So to conclude ſaith Saint Gregory. It is a ſtreame where in the little Lambe may wade, and the great Elephants may ſwim. Therefore

Fulgent. in ſermo. de confeſſoribus.

Chriſoſt. in 2 Theſſ. Hom 3.

Greg. in Epiſt ad Leandrum. Pſal. 24.

lift vp your heades ye gates, and lift vp your selues you euerlasting doores, and the King of glory shall come in. For the Lord hath chosen Syon, and loued to dwell in it; saying, this is my rest for euer: heere will I dwell for I haue a delight therein, Psal. 132. 13. 14. *Eleuate portæ æternales.*

Lastly our Sauiour Christ saith, that many that seeke to enter in shall not bee able: noting thereby, that euen of them that seeke many shall steppe short, because they seeke him not aright. Esaias also saith: Except the Lord of hostes had left vs a seede, we had beene as Sodome, and like to Gomorrah. The Apostle alleadgeth out of the Prophets, that the Lord will make a short accompt in the earth, and gather it into a short summe with righteousnes. The Prophet Amos giueth good counsell, saying, Seeke the Lord, and ye shall liue: seeke good and not euill: hate the euill and loue the good, and establish iudement in the gate. It may be that the Lord of hostes will be mercifull vnto the remnant of Ioseph. *Luc. 13. 24.* *Esay 1. 9.* *Es. 10. 22* *Ro. 9. 28.* *Amos 5. 14.*

The reason why many which seeke to enter into eternall life shall not bee able. God hath appointed vnto euery man that

lineth in the Church a certaine time of repentance, and of comming to Christ, and he which mispendeth that time and is not made Christian then, can neuer be saued. This made our Sauiour Christ to weepe for Ierusalem, and say. Oh if thou hadst
Verse 44. knowne at the least in this thy day, those things which belong to thy peace, but now are they hidden from thine eyes.
Luk. 9,42 And he further signifieth the destruction of Ierusalem: because she knew not the time of her visitation. Heere wee learne that the neglecting of this time is one cause why not one or two, but many shall seeke to enter into the kingdome of Heauen, and yet shall not be able. It is a marnellous thing that they which seeke to bee saued should perish: but the fault is theirs which seeke when it is too late.

9. things required. There are nine thinges required of all that shall be saued by Christ.

1. Firſt hee must bee a new Creature. 1. Cor. 5. 17.

2. Secondly hee must liue, not after the lusts of men, but after the will of God. 1. Pet 4. 2.

3. Thirdly he must be zealous of good workes. Tit. 2. 14.

4 Fourthly

4. Fourthly hee muſt dye to ſinne, and liue to righteouſnes. Rom. 6.14.

5. Fiftly he muſt be holy and vnblamable. Coloſſ. 2.6.

6. Sixtly he muſt ſo walke as Chriſt hath walked. Iohn 2.6.

7. Seauenthly hee muſt crucifie the fleſh, with the affections and luſtes. Gal. 5.24.

8. Eyghtly he muſt walke, not after the fleſh but after the Spirit. Rom. 8.1.

9. Laſt of all hee muſt ſerue God in holines and righteouſnes all the dayes of his life. Luk. 1.75.

If theſe thinges be in you in ſome meaſure of truth, then your hope is currant, ſound, and good, otherwiſe it is nothing worth. For in vaine do men ſay they hope to be ſaued by Chriſt, when as they walk wickedly and diſſolutely: The reaſon hereof is, becauſe the members muſt be ſutable to the head: But Chriſt our head is holy, therefore we his members muſt be holy alſo: as it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy. Otherwiſe if we will ioyne prophane and vnholy members to our holy head Chriſt, then we make Chriſt a monſter: As if we ſhould ioyn ſwearers, drunkards

1 Pet. 1. 16.

kards, whoremongers and such like to be the members of Christ, and to haue life and saluation by him. But the case is far otherwise: For first of all before a Christian can come to haue an inward feeling and true vnderstanding of these thinges, there are fiue other especiall thinges to be required of euery true Christian which liueth in the Church.

First, the acknowledgment of sinnes committed against the law of the Lord.

Secondly, the acknowledgment of Gods angry countenance to be most iustly bent against him for his sinnes.

Thirdly, an inward sorrow and paine of the heart and soule for sinne

But here we are most warily to take heed that we content not our selues with these three former poynts, for if wee doe, the vilest firebrands in hell, Iudas, Pharao, Saul, Herod, Achitophell, and such like, shall goe before vs, or be our equals in the profession of repentance.

There are two manner of repentances, the one a true repentance to life, the other a false repentance to death: as wee may see by Iudas, who is said to haue repented, and which is more, to haue confessed his

fault

fault, and which is moſt of all, to haue made reſtitution: and yet it was a falſe repentance, and why? becauſe it ſprang not of a true faith, but as afore.

Peter repented and wept bitterly, and was ſaued thereby, though he neuer made confeſſion nor ſatiſfaction: And why? becauſe it ſprang of a true and liuely faith in Chriſt.

Quid ergo eſt? What is it then that is required at our hands? theſe two things ſubſequent moſt chiefely and principally, which may be well called, Vltima et ſumma, the laſt and higheſt of all: that is, a perfect hatred, loathing and deteſting of ſinne. For ſuch onely begin to ceaſe from ſinne.

Laſtly, the acknowledgment of the mercy of God offered in that one redeemer, and onely mediator betweene God and man, the man Chriſt Jeſus, with a full perſwaſion of the heart, a ſure confidence of an aſſured reſt of conſcience grounded vpon the promiſe of Gods mercie, that we ſhall be freely accepted with God in Chriſt: for that, 1. Tim. 5

First our ſinnes are purged in his blood. 1. Ioh. 1. 2. Eſa 53.

2 Secondly, his righteousnes is imputed vnto vs. Rom. 4. 1. 1. Cor. 1. 30.

The fathers looked for none other righteousnes then this righteousnes of Christ: As the Apostle Paul proueth sufficiently by that one example of Abraham, who is said to rest himselfe vpon that righteousnes of faith, which is the righteousnes which God giueth vs in Christ, apprehended by faith onely.

2 pet. 1, 18 19 The Apostle S. Peter which fell most dangerously, comforted himselfe with this righteousnes, and all men that will beleeue his doctrine, affirming that wee cannot be saued with siluer or gold, but with the precious blood of Iesus Christ, as of a Lambe vndefiled.

Here then wee see what is required of all that shall be saued by Christ: which thinges, if we doe beliene with a liuely faith, planted and grounded vpon the sure promises of Gods mercy offered vnto vs in Christ, and not doubting thereof, but with all diligence keepe and performe the premises aforesaid, then we shall be assured to enter in at the straight gate, and narrow way, leading vnto eternall life.

Ioh. 17. 3 Saluation is the guift of God, which hee freely

freely bestoweth vpon all that seeke him aright. This is eternall life to know the Father, and him whom he hath sent, Iesus Christ. Wee must seeke God aright. But some perhaps will say, how shall we seeke him aright? I answer, Dilige deum et mandata eius obserua, Loue God and keep his commandements. Hereby shall all men know that you seeke him as you ought. S. Augustine speaking of this matter saith, Da amantem et sentit quid dico, si autem frigido loquor, nescit quid loquar. Giue me a man that is in loue with God, and he seeth this to be true which I say, but if I talke to a cold Christian, he vnderstandeth not what I say. And this is the cause why Christ, talking of the keeping his commandements, repeateth so often this word Loue, as the surest cause of keeping the same: for want whereof in the world, the world keepeth them not, as there he sheweth. If you Ioh. 14
loue me keepe my commandements. Againe, Hee that hath my commandements and keepeth them, hee is hee that loueth mee. And againe, Hee which loueth me will keepe my commandements. And Rom. 13
what S. Austen exhorts vs vnto, Ama a- 15

morem illius, Loue this his loue: His, deserues and requires loue. O loue the Lord, saith the Prophet Dauid, all his saints: If no loue, no saints: and yet no true loue vnlesse faith. Yee that loue the Lord see that you hate euill and doe good, seeke the Lord and ye shall liue for euermore.

psal,32.25

psal,57,10

Can God bestow better thinges vpon his children then eternall life? who is the efficient cause of saluation by the working of the holy Ghost in the hearts of his children, through faith in Christ Jesus. For faith is ye testimony of Gods spirit: which spirit doth not onely speake within vs, but also perswadeth vs of the good grace of God towards vs, by arguments drawn from our free redemption in Christ.

Rom,8,16

Lastly, the same spirit mortifieth sinne in vs, and quickneth our mortall bodies to bring forth most sweet and pleasant fruites vnto God.

Rom, 8, 11

Gal,5, 22

This breedeth that inward solace, ioy and peace which the mind and conscience hath with God, because it is freed from the bondage of sinne, the curse of the law &c. and restored to grace againe.

This ioy and solace of a good consci-

vnce, the Apostle calleth it the Kingdome of God. Rom. 14. 17. And an especiall frute of the holy Ghost, Gal. 5. 22. And a sure consequent of our Justification by faith. Rom. 5. 1. and the child of God in all his troubles comforteth himselfe therewith as with a feast. Dauid longed for this ioy, as appeareth in his earnest prayer for it, where he cryeth, saying, Restore to me the ioy of thy saluation, and stablish me with thy free spirit. Many which seek to enter in at the straight gate shall not be able. Wherefore thou secure worldling, thy conscience telleth thee that thou hast not yet sought the Lord aright: thou hast not yet repented, and thou art not as yet a liuely member of Iesus Christ. And further thou knowest, that howsoeuer thou art aliue at this time, yet thou hast no lease of thy life. God may call thee forth of the world the next yeare, the next howre: yea hee may strike thee with a sodaine death at this very present. And in very truth, if thou goest forth of this world being no repentant sinner, thou goest damned to hell. Therefore delay not one minute of an howre longer, but with all speed repent and turne vnto

pro. 15 15

ps. 51. 12

God

Mat, 3, 8 God, and bring forth fruites worthy a-
mendment of life, that all thy sinnes may
be done away, when the day of death, or
the day of iudgment shall be. And doe not
thinke with thy selfe, it shall be sufficient
to deferre thy turning vnto God till the
last day, for late repentance is seldome
true repentance. And he which continu-
eth long in any sinne is in a dangerous
case. If a man lie long sicke in any disease,
he will scarce recouer his former health:
and he which is growne in the custome
of any sinne, and the sinne is become ripe
in him, it is a thousand to one he is neuer
Iam, 1, 15 saued, according to that of S. Iames, Sin
being perfected bringeth forth death.

Let vs therefore without any delay
Tit, 2, 10 repent and turne vnto God: for if we liue
in this world not being true Christians,
wee are far more vile then the basest crea-
tures of all, euen the Dogge or Toade.
Rom, 8, 10 For first we are nothing else but a filthy
dunghill of all abomination and vncleann-
nes, the stinke whereof hath infected hea-
uen and earth, and no perfumes could e-
uer delay it in the nostrils of God: but on-
Ephe, 5, 2 ly the suffering of Christ being a sacrifice
of a sweet smelling sauour to God. Wee

make

make it very dainty to come neere a lazar man full of botches, blaines, and soares: but much more are these men to be abhorred, which haue lien many yeares starke Eph. 2. 3.
dead in sinnes and trespasses: and therefore now doe nothing els but rot & stinke in them like vgly loathsome carrions.

Againe, if we liue as secure worldlings and carnall Ghospellers, and not as true Christians, wee are in danger of all the iudgement of God, so that euery moment some of them may befall vs. We may perish sodainly by water, with the old World, wee may be consumed with fire and brimstone with Sodome & Gomorrah: wee may bee swallowed vp of the earth with Cora, Dathan, and Abiram, we may hang our selues with Iudas, wee may haue our braines dashed out against the ground and bee eaten vp of dogges with Iesabell, we may die in hardnes of heart with Pharaoh, wee may despayre with Caine and Iudas, we may be stricken with suddaine death with Ananias and Saphira his wife: wee may bee eaten of wormes with Herod: we may be smitten that wee cannot heare Gods word with Felix: wee may voyd our guttes at the

stoole

stoole with Arrius: wee may cry at o
death that we are damned with Laomu
we may be left vnto our selues to mock
Deut. 34. blaspheme and renounce Christ with
lian the Apostata, and we may suffer m
ny more fearefull iudgements where
the Lord hath great store, and tend
the confounding of them that will not
Esay 4. humbled vnder his hand. Contrariwi
the true Christian is so far out of t
reach of Gods iudgements, that they ca
not hurt him. Christ is a couering and
cloud vnto thee against the heat and ten
pest of Gods iudgement, when a man
Ex, 12, 22 heart is sprinckled with the blood of th
immaculate lambe, all the plagues of G
passe ouer him. In the destruction of Je
rusalem the righteous beare a marke
their forehead and are saued. Therefo
let him that regards his owne safety b
Zach. 9, 4 come a Christian.

Now because you see that there be ma
ny strong barres and stoppes out of he
uen, and a very wide passage into hell.
The best counsel therefore that I can gi
you, if it were for my life, is to bee muc
exercised in the word of God, both in th
hearing, reading and meditation ther co
an

nd also to purchase vnto your selues the
incere ministry of the Gospell, and to
make conscience to liue vnder it, esteeming
your selues happy if you haue it, though
you want all other things: and vnhappy if
you haue it not, though you haue all other
things. For it is a peereleſſe pearle, and Ma. 13,44
an incomparable Iewell: for the purcha-
sing whereof we are aduised by our Lord
Iesus, to sell all that wee haue, rather
then to goe without it. Againe, our Sa-
viour Christ giueth the same counsell to Apo. 3,18.
the Church of Laodicea in these words.
I counsell thee to buy of me gold tryed by
the fire, that thou maist be ritch, & white
rayment that thou maist be cloathed, and
that thy filthy nakednes doe not appeare:
and anoynt thine eyes with eye-salue,
that thou maist see: where you see the word
of God is compared to most pretious gold
whereby we are made spiritually ritch:
and to glittering attire, wherewith our na-
ked soules are cloathed, & to an eye-salue
wherewith our spiritual blindnes is cured.
Wee are aduertised also by Iesus Christ,
whose counsell is euer the best, that wee
should buy these things whatsoeuer they
cost vs. The same counsel also giueth wise

Salomon,

Pro,23,23 Salomon, saying buy the truth, but sell not. So then wee see the counsell which herein I giue you is not mine owne, but the counsell of Jesus Christ himselfe, and Saloman the wise. Ego fidenter dico. I speake boldly: and who can or who dare speake against their counsell.

Now as I haue aduised you to be much exercised in the hearing, reading, meditation of the word of God, which is indeed good, profitable and necessary: yet you must of necessity frequent preaching of the word, the sound preaching of the Gospell, which is the chiefest and most principall meanes, which God hath ordayned and sanctified for the sauing of mens soules: as it is plainely set downe. When the world (by wisedome) knew

1 Cor, 1, 21, not God, in the wisedome of God, it pleased God by the foolishnes of preaching to saue them that beleeue. For the word preached is the ordinary meanes to worke faith, which indeed is confirmed by hearing, reading, meditation in the

Ro.10,14 word, prayer, &c. As it is written. How shall they call on him, on whom they haue not beleeued: and how shall they beleeue in him, whom they haue not heard: and

how

how shall they heare without a Preacher?

For that Niniue repented at the preaching of Ionas. It was therefore the word of the Lord preached by the ministery of Nathan, that was the instrumentall cause of King Dauids hearty repentance, as Samuell recorded it, and he confesseth it in the 51. Psal. 2 Sam. 12

Here then you see, that the chiefest and most principall meanes which God hath ordayned and sanctified for the sauing of soules, is the word of God preached, and faith is thereby increased and wrought in the hearts of the hearers: As S. Paul saith, Faith is wrought by the word of God preached. Rom. 10 14.

Faith doth not onely heare the word, receiue the word, vnderstand the word, reioyce in the word, for thus far many hipocrites haue gone in the profession of faith, as appeareth by the seede sowne in the stony ground: hee heareth the word, and incontinently with ioy receiueth it; yet hath he no roote in himselfe, and dureth but for a season, for as soone as tribulation or persecution commeth, because of the word by and by he is offended. But Mat 13, 20 21.

faith

faith also openeth the most secret parte of the heart, and therein hideth the word of God, as a most precious iewell, in a treasure house, for the good vses which God hath appointed. And of this keeping of the word in the secret of the heart, these places doe testifie.

1 Pro. 4. 20. My sonne, hearken vnto my words, incline thine eare vnto my sayinges: let them not depart from thine eies, but keepe them in the middest of thine heart.

2 Psal. 119. 11. I haue hid thy promises in mine heart, that I might not sinne against the.

3 Psal. 51. Behould thou louest truth in the inward affections, therefore hast thou taught me wisdome in the secret of my heart.

4 Luk. 2. 19. But Mary kept all these sayings and pondred them in her heart. Againe, vers. 51. His mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

For if the word of God be not well wrapped in the heart, it shall be sone vncouered, discryed & deuoured of some aduersary, or some euill weed will growe therewithall and choake it: as appeareth

in

in the euill hearers, who are compared to the séede which was sowed among thornes, He heareth the word, but the care of this world, and the deceiptfulnes of riches choake the word, and hee is made vnfrutefull. Mat.13. 22.

But the immortall and euerlasting séed, which was sowed in the good grownd, was so déepely rooted in the heart of of S. Ieremie, that he cryed out against such euill hearers, saying, His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut vp in my bones: and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay, for I had heard the rayling of many, and feare on euery side. And Cap. 23. 9. Mine heart breaketh within me because of the Prophets, all my bones shake: I am like a drunken man, & like a man whom wine hath ouercome; for the presence of the Lord, and for his holy words. Ver. 29. Is not my word like fire (saith the Lord) & like a hammer that breaketh the hard stone? Ier. 20.9. 10. Psal. 19.7.

Now dearly beloued, this doctrine which I teach you is not mine owne, it is the doctrine of Iesus Christ, which conuerteth the soule: which teacheth the word of God truely, and guideth the hearts of

euery true Christian, the plaine mans path-way in at the straight gate, leading to euerlasting saluation.

Awake thou therefore that sleepest in the bed of sinne, and make thy flinty heart to bleed, and shed riuers of teares betimes in bewaling of thy sinnes: and be heartily sory for them, and stand vp from the dead and Christ shal giue thee light: open thine heart without any further delay to receiue Christ, and then he will come and bind the strong man Sathan, and cast him out, and dwell in thee himselfe. Then the gates of hell shall neuer preuaile against thee; then shalt thou enter with Christ in at the straight gate and narrow way, which leadeth vnto eternal life, and there dwell with him for euer.

Psal. 118. 19. 20. Open therefore vnto vs O Lord, the gates of righteousnes that we may goe in to them and praise thy holy name. This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shal enter into it and praise him for euermore.

Heb. 13. 20. 21. The God of peace, which brought a gaine from the dead, the Lord Iesus, the great Shepheard of the sheepe, through the bloud of the euerlasting couenant, make vs perfect in all good workes, cut

of

of all lets and hinderances both within vs, and without vs: sanctifie vs throughout, amend all our imperfections, & keepe vs blameleſſe vntill the day of his moſt glorious appearing, that we may enter with him into his heauenly kingdome: to whom with the Father & holy Spirit, one God in Trinity, and Trinity in vnity, be all bleſſing and glory world without end.

Amen.

(***)

Soli Deo gloria.